

Workington Urban Sanitary Authority.



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE YEAR 1907,

BY

JOHN HIGGET, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Workington :

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR 1907.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Workington Urban
Sanitary Authority.*

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour of submitting to you my Report of the health of Workington during the year 1907, with an account of the Sanitary work performed during the same period.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY.

(Based upon an estimated population of 28,000.)

Area of District in Acres	...	...	2,244.
Estimated Population	...	...	28,500.
Density of Population per Acre	...	...	12·7.
Inhabited Houses	...	...	5,200.
Rateable Value of District	...	...	£100,540.
Births	...	...	779.
Birth-rate	...	...	27·3.
Deaths	...	...	465.
Death-rate	...	...	16·3.
Zymotic Deaths	...	...	44.
Zymotic Death-rate	...	...	1·5.
Infant Mortality	...	...	130·5.
Infectious Cases Isolated at Fever Hospital			235.

VITAL STATISTICS.

During the year the births of 779 children have been registered, of these 389 were males and 390 females. This gives a rate of 27·3 per 1,000 of the population, as compared with 32·5 per 1,000 in 1906.

MORTAL STATISTICS.

During the past year 465 deaths were registered, of these 255 were males and 210 females. This is equal to a death-rate of 16·3 per 1,000 as compared with 16·8 for 1906.

The annual death-rates since 1882 have been :—

In 1882	...	...	24·4 per 1,000.
„ 1883	...	...	18·2 „
„ 1884	...	...	16·2 „
„ 1885	...	...	18·7 „
„ 1886	...	...	17·7 „
„ 1887	...	...	18·9 „
„ 1888	...	...	21 „
„ 1889	...	...	18 „
„ 1890	...	...	18·3 „
„ 1891	...	...	16·6 „
„ 1892	...	...	19 „
„ 1893	...	...	16 „
„ 1894	...	...	14·95 „
„ 1895	...	...	19·5 „
„ 1896	...	...	15·8 „
„ 1897	...	...	14·46 „
„ 1898	...	...	20·3 „
„ 1899	...	...	17·6 „
„ 1900	...	...	19·6 „
„ 1901	...	...	15·5 „
„ 1902	...	...	16·5 „

In 1903	...	...	17·8 per 1,000.
„ 1904	...	...	16·4 „
„ 1905	...	...	17·7 „
„ 1906	...	...	16·8 „
„ 1907	...	...	16·3 „

The following is a classification of the ages at which the deaths occurred :—

Under 1 year	...	...	104
Over 1 and under 5	...	...	59
„ 5	„ 15	..	26
„ 15	„ 25	...	29
„ 25	„ 60	...	150
„ 60	...	...	97
Total			465

INFANT MORTALITY

Was at the rate of 133·5 per 1,000 registered births as compared with 148·3 for preceding year, and included 10 deaths from convulsions, 18 from premature birth, 5 from measles, 20 from gastritis, 4 from diarrhœa, 2 from whooping cough, 3 from meningitis, 1 from croup, 1 from pneumonia, 4 from phthisis. and 11 from bronchitis.

THE ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE

Was equal to 1·5 per 1,000, the number registered from each zymotic disease being as follows :—

Small Pox	...	...	0
Measles	...	...	6
Scarlet Fever	...	...	8
Diphtheria	...	...	9
Whooping Cough	..	...	4
Typhus Fever	...	...	0
Enteric Fever	...	...	13
Diarrhœa and Dysentry	...	...	4
Total			44

INFECTIOUS DISEASES (NOTIFICATION) ACT.

Under this Act there has been reported to me :—

Scarlet Fever	..	...	301
Enteric	...	...	52
Diphtheria	...	...	20
Erysipelas	...	...	50
Membranous Croup		...	5
Total			428

NUMBER OF PATIENTS REMOVED TO ELLERBECK DURING 1907.

Month.	Scarlet Fever.		Enteric Fever		Total.
January	...	20	...	—	20
February	...	20	...	2	22
March	...	15	...	—	15
April	...	9	...	2	11
May	...	14	...	1	15
June	...	11	...	1	12
July	...	13	...	1	14
August	...	19	...	—	19
September	...	15	...	2	17
October	...	41	...	1	42
November	...	19	...	1	20
December	...	21	...	7	28
Totals	...	217		18	235

NOTIFICATIONS ATTENDED TO.—NATURE AND NO. OF CASES
MONTHLY.

	Diph- theria.		Mem. Croup.		Erysi- pelas.		Scarlet Fever.		En- teric.	Ttl.
Jan	0	...	0	...	4	...	17	...	3—	24
Feb	1	...	0	...	7	...	23	...	5—	36

	Diph- theria.		Mem. Croup.		Erysi- pelas.		Scarlet Fever.		En- teric.	T'tl.
March ...	0	...	1	...	7	...	18	...	6—	32
April ...	0	...	1	...	3	...	11	...	3—	18
May.....	2	...	0	...	3	...	22	...	4—	31
June ...	4	...	0	...	4	...	10	...	1—	19
July ...	0	...	0	...	4	...	17	...	0—	21
August..	3	...	0	...	4	...	21	...	0—	28
Sept. ...	3	...	0	...	2	...	18	...	2—	25
Oct.....	4	...	1	...	2	...	70	...	5—	82
Nov. ...	0	...	1	...	5	...	30	...	9—	45
Dec	3	...	1	...	5	...	44	...	14—	67
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Totals	20		5		50		301		52	428

ELLERBECK HOSPITAL.

This has been a busy year at your Infectious Hospital, the number of cases treated being 235, of which 217 were Scarlet Fever and 18 Enteric Fever.

While opinions may differ as to the benefit to be derived from the removal to hospital of cases of infectious disease, there can be no doubt it is the one and only policy that remains if proper isolation is to be aimed at, and this especially in a district such as ours, where the industrial element forms such a large proportion of the population. In most of the cases notified the home accommodation was insufficient to allow of a special sick room being devoted to the exclusive use of the sufferer, and, as often happened when the type was mild—as in the majority of instances it was—even where an effort was made at the beginning to secure isolation, the general well-being of the patient relaxed the pristine vigilance, and probably long before the period of infection terminated quarantine had ceased and the individual once more restored to the family circle. The increasing disposition on the part of the public

to take advantage of the practical benefits to be derived from your Institution is a further indication of the appreciation of the work done by the matron and the nursing staff generally.

SCARLET FEVER.

As will be seen from the statistics your district, in common with many others, has during the year suffered from Scarlet Fever in epidemic form. It began, indeed, during the last few months of 1906, ran for the most part during the whole of last year, attaining its maximum in the month of October, and even yet shows little or no signs of abatement. This, in a modified way, is what happened in the last great epidemic we had, referred to in my Annual Report for 1895, when the total number of cases notified for that year amounted to 645, with 24 fatal cases, or a rate of 1·0 per thousand as compared with a mortality of 8 for past year, or a death-rate of ·2 per thousand per annum. This very low mortality would seem to indicate the advantages of hospital as against home treatment. I have from time to time been supplied with and carefully watched the School Attendance Returns, and at no time have these fallen sufficiently low to warrant me in advising school closure. In my report for 1894 I said—"At no time during the epidemic did I deem it necessary to advise the closure of the schools, and this for several reasons. In a densely populated Urban District such as ours the children freely associate together in the streets and houses, and we have not as a rule, and as prevails in rural districts, children coming from other villages where the disease may not be prevalent." And this to-day fairly represents the attitude of my mind with regard to school closure; and at the present time the average school attendance is about 85 per cent.

During the Christmas holidays, and acting on my suggestion, opportunity was taken by the Education Authority to more thoroughly cleanse and disinfect the school buildings.

ENTERIC FEVER.

With the exception of two months during the past year, viz., July and August, this disease has been more or less with us, the greatest number of cases being notified in December. In my monthly reports, and particularly in the Special Report of March last, I have from time to time written fully on this subject, and would direct your further attention to these. The immediate cause of Enteric Fever is the bacillus of Typhoid, the poison of which is contained in the alvine discharges of the patient, contact with which may communicate the disease to a healthy person. A continuation of cases such as we have experienced points most probably to poisoning of air, soil, drinking water, milk, or other ingesta, with the fever poison. The first two of these emphasises, as I have frequently pointed out, the urgent need that exists at all times not only to see that the system generally is in perfect working order, but also that sewers and drains are systematically and frequently flushed and disinfected, as well as properly ventilated. In sewers that are stagnant, gas abundantly produced by the formation and the bursting of bubbles may disseminate solid particles in the air, and some of these may be wafted about the grids. Defective drainage and sewerage, accumulations of filth, overcrowding, and disregard of ventilation and of sanitary laws generally, are all potent factors in favouring the power of the typhoid bacillus. There is not the slightest evidence in the cases which we have had under observation to connect either the water or the milk supplies, though it must be remembered with regard to the latter that a considerable quantity comes from outside districts, and it would seem to be eminently necessary that further powers should be given to Urban Authorities to deal with this matter.

HOUSING QUESTION.

With regard to the housing question, with the exception of obtaining closing orders for certain properties unfit for human habitation, little has been done during the year, and this for various reasons, the principal, perhaps, being the very limited powers at present possessed by Urban Authorities, while the depressed condition of our staple trade did not seem to justify any undue expenditure. It is understood that a new Housing Bill will form one of the most important measures to be submitted in the forthcoming session.

This is a social question in which, as you are doubtless aware, I have for long taken a deep interest, the sum of the whole matter to my mind consisting in the solution of the problem how to provide—not for the housing of the better working classes, which any private speculative builder can see to—but for those whose wage-earning power is so limited that in the matter of house rent 2s. 6d. or, at most, 3s. per week is all that can be looked for. Hitherto, in urban districts, any scheme submitted under the Housing of the Working Classes Act (and I have myself submitted two such) has been rejected or deferred because (1) of the great expense likely to be entailed in obtaining ground, and (2) the almost impossible task of providing a suitable class of property without assistance from the rates. In my humble opinion any Bill which renders the attainment of these easier will bestow countless blessings on the community generally, and will enable even the poorest poor to realise “the true pathos and sublime of human life” by making it possible to provide “a happy household clime for weans and wife.” This to my mind is the great social question of the day, which it is to be hoped will be kept outside of party strife and regarded in the light of a duty undertaken for the sake of our common humanity.

JOINT SMALLPOX HOSPITAL.

I trust your Authority is continuing to push vigorously forward the establishment of a Joint Smallpox Hospital, as this is a matter which at any moment may become to you one of the most serious importance. Situated as you have been during nearly the whole of last year with your Infectious Hospital at Ellerbeck full, almost to overflowing, and containing cases in a more or less critical state, it would not be possible should smallpox unfortunately visit us to clear these out, and as this is a disease in which to be of any benefit to the community prompt isolation is necessary, the provision of a suitable hospital is an absolute necessity. You are pretty well aware as to the opinion I hold with regard to the protection afforded by vaccination, and the practical abolition of the compulsory clause (which came into operation this year) bids fair in the not distant future to render the necessity for smallpox hospitals more and more urgent. In any case, it is my duty to warn you of the perilous condition with regard to smallpox in which we stand at the present time. We are practically open to attack, and in the matter of isolation are, for the reasons before stated, totally unprovided. If we were suddenly called upon, as indeed might very easily happen, to put up temporary buildings for hospital purposes, the expense would not only be very considerable, but the matter of acquiring a suitable site would be one of the gravest difficulty; and, therefore, again I place before your Authority that this question of a District Smallpox Hospital should be regarded in the light of extreme urgency.

DAIRIES AND COW SHEDS.

During the year, in conjunction with your Inspector, I have made an examination of the Dairies and Cow Sheds in your district, and have already reported to you my opinion

with regard to the same. Your authority has, as the outcome, caused notices to be served on all persons interested, informing them of your determination in the future to put into more stringent operation the regulations which you adopted in June, 1893, with respect to Dairies, Cow Sheds, and Milk Shops, more especially with regard to ventilation, drainage, water supply, and air space, per head provided.

Other matters relating to Factory and Workshops Act, Ice Cream and Fried Fish Shops, and Registered Common Lodging Houses, have received attention, and have been dealt with at length by your Inspector in his report. And I am again further indebted to him for much valuable assistance which has been rendered me during the year, and for the intelligent and painstaking manner in which he has co-operated with

Yours respectfully,

JOHN HIGGET, M.D., M.O.H.

BOROUGH OF WORKINGTON.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Town Hall,
Workington,
January, 1908.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Workington Urban
Sanitary Authority.*

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Eighteenth Annual Report, shewing a summary of the work done in the Inspector of Nuisances Department during the year ending 31st December, 1907.

GENERAL INSPECTION OF THE BOROUGH AND REMOVAL OF
NUISANCES.

I have, during the year under review, visited and inspected all parts of the Borough, courts, yards, lanes, and open spaces, and have given, as far as possible, systematic and periodic attention, with a view to detection and abatement of nuisances, and such as have been discovered have been dealt with, with as little delay as possible, under the Public Health Acts and the Bye-laws in force in your district.

Minor nuisances, arising from the careless habits of many householders, not arising from any particular structural defect, I have succeeded in getting abated by verbal intimation; and, where and when structural alterations were necessary, either by preliminary or statutory notices.

I am pleased to report that it has not been necessary to have recourse to police court proceedings, except in relation to insanitary property hereafter mentioned.

SUMMARY OF NUISANCES.

To choked and filthy water-closets	...	...	40
„ defective water-closets	...	...	42
„ provision of water-closets	...	...	24
„ defective drains	...	...	20
„ opening out stopped drains	...	...	73
„ ventilation of coil pipes	...	...	2
„ offensive and defective gullies	...	...	22
„ provision and repairs to waste pipes	...	...	7
„ defective pavements in back areas	...	...	30
„ accumulation of manure	...	...	14
„ interior of houses needing repairs	...	...	12
„ houses with inadequate ventilation	...	...	6
„ overcrowding in houses	...	...	12
„ abatement of smoke nuisances	...	...	4
„ defective spouts	...	...	20
„ whitewashing and cleansing of houses	...	...	16
„ removal of poultry, &c.	...	...	11
„ provision of drains	...	...	6
„ re-construction of drains	...	...	7
Miscellaneous (not included in above)	...	...	12
			<hr/>
			380

INSANITARY PROPERTY.

During the year Police Court proceedings were taken under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, for the closing of three cottages, situate and being in Waugh's Passage, Udale Street, the houses being in a dilapidated condition, with no through ventilation, and with narrow forecourt some four feet in width, and approached from Udale Street through a long and dark narrow passage; and a closing order also obtained, after several hearings, in relation to a small cottage

in Longstairs, totalling four dealt with during the aforesaid time.

From a combination of unfavourable circumstances, it is regrettable that it has not been possible to deal in a more progressive manner with insanitary areas.

ICE CREAM AND FRIED FISH SHOPS.

Premises from which fried fish and chipped potatoes are retailed out, and in some cases consumed on the premises, are in strong evidence in your district, and continue to be little short of a nuisance, very largely caused by the process of frying, &c. It is perhaps a matter for regret that local authorities have at present no power to compel the registration of these places, as in my opinion, in most cases, they cause a greater nuisance and discomfort than some of the scheduled offensive trades.

The aforementioned places, in addition to places where ice cream is manufactured and sold, have been subject to frequent inspection.

MARKETS.

As in previous years, these centres so largely used for the dissemination of food stuffs have been regularly supervised; and, in the latter part of the year, several vendors of fruit (especially apples, bananas, grapes, &c.) cautioned about throwing decayed fruit on the ground in close proximity to the stalls, instead of using proper receptacles for the purpose. I have personally seen, on more than one occasion, children, and even those of riper years, gathering up this refuse, for what purpose may be readily imagined. With respect to the meat supply still contributed from the country districts, and deposited for sale on Hag Hill, I have not seen

anything one might seize with any reasonable hope of obtaining a magistrates' order for its destruction, though it is a matter to be deplored that occasionally sheep and cattle are passed through and sold (not to Workington butchers, to their credit be it said) at prices which seem to clearly indicate that animals so sold are not of the soundest description, *i.e.*, on the 30th of October last, two sheep were passed through the ring of the Workington Auction Mart, and sold to a butcher residing within three miles of Workington at the magnificent sum of one shilling and ninepence each.

BOROUGH SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

The Public Abattoirs, on Harrington Road, have been visited almost daily (Sundays excepted), the premises have been twice limewashed during the year, and are kept in a generally satisfactory condition; complaints are, however, occasionally made as to the unpleasant emanations in the vicinity, this arises principally at such times as the catch pits are being cleaned out, or during the removal of refuse from the yard. It is by no means easy to keep down these complaints as it is a work which must be done, and also that considerable difficulty has at times been experienced in the ultimate disposal of slaughter house offal, &c.

The private slaughter house run by Mr. A. Fisher, and situated in Elizabeth Street, is also in a satisfactory condition, and well conducted.

No meat has been seized or condemned during the year.

The annexed table shows the number of animals slaughtered at each place during 1907 :—

BOROUGH SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

Cattle.	Sheep.	Lambs.	Calves.	Pigs.	Total.
2,089	6,112	794	167	1,729	10,891

PRIVATE SLAUGHTER HOUSE, ELIZABETH STREET.

Cattle.	Sheep.	Lambs.	Calves.	Pigs.	Total.
115	550	280	36	Nil.	981

TENTS AND VANS.

The Vans used as dwellings which have visited the town during the year at fair times, and occasional calls between the half-yearly carnivals, have been inspected, some trouble having been given by the owners of small tents who pitched their domiciles on the Low Green, and near the New Road, and after some delay, the people concerned were removed to more suitable quarters. I am pleased to say that the vans were found in a cleanly condition, and the occupiers free from disease of an infectious character.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.

There are 27 cowkeepers within the Borough, the number of milch cows being approximately 280, the premises of each have been visited as frequently as possible, and intimations given where accumulation of manure existed, or other matters requiring attention with regard to the abatement of nuisances, and in the latter part of the year, in company with the Medical Officer of Health, a further inspection was made, and, in the majority of byres, considerable overcrowding discovered. By the instructions of the Council, notices have been sent out with a view to the abatement of overcrowding, and to bring these places into line and conformity with the Borough Byelaws.

In addition to cowkeepers, there are six purveyors of milk, the latter obtaining milk from country districts; the premises in each case within the Borough have been inspected and found clean. Though your officials have no control over

outside sources of supply, and, in this connection, I may say that from fourteen to eighteen farmers, &c., bring milk into the town for sale. What bearing these circumstances may have (if any) in unfavourably influencing the health of the town has not as yet been discovered.

REGISTERED COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

No change in the number or location of the Registered Common Lodging Houses has occurred, the situations being as follows :—

	Registered No. of Lodgers.
10, Ramsey Brow—Mrs. Cruce	... 13
22, Udale Street—Mrs. Doherty	... 8
29, Udale Street—R. Leonard	... 11
43, Derwent Street—Mrs. Brew	... 25
51, Church Street—Mrs. Bateman	... 28
70, „ „ „	... 22

The various centres have been weekly inspected; no sickness of an infectious nature has taken place; the houses are in fairly good sanitary condition; the number of people accommodated during the year being 22,819 (including children under 14 years of age) comprised as follows :

17,649 males, 2,480 females,—adults.

1,752 „ 943 „ —under 14 years of age.

representing approximately a monetary return of £375 8s. 8d.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS' ACT.

The various Factories and Workshops within the Borough have been visited and inspected by the Medical Officer of Health and myself. No serious nuisance has been discovered, and, where any infringement of the Act has been observed,

steps taken as early as possible to secure compliance. Complaints regarding workshops, notices of occupation, &c., received from H.M. Factory Inspector, have also been attended to.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION ACT.

The year to which this return relates has been an exceptionally heavy one, and has claimed a large portion of my time, not the least item of which has been at times the difficulty in securing a horse for the removal of Fever patients. Whether it would not pay the Corporation to secure a suitable animal for this purpose is worthy of consideration, seeing that over £25 has been, or will have to be, paid for this special work. Disinfectants have, in all cases where necessary, been freely and liberally supplied, and all houses disinfected after the removal or recovery of the patients. Out of the 428 cases notified, 235 have been removed to Ellerbeck for isolation and treatment.

Diphtheria	...	20
Membranous Croup	...	5
Erysipelas	...	50
Scarlet Fever	...	301
Enteric Fever	...	52
Total		428

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM SHELDON,
Inspector of Nuisances.

